

YoungStar Family Literacy Engagement Strategies

The Basics: How do children make the leap to reading the written word?

High quality child care providers know that children learn to read by:

- Exploring books and print;
- Repeating words, sounds, letters, and phrases;
- Figuring out how words or letters sound;
- Understanding that words are symbols for objects and ideas;
- Identifying and matching letters and words, and
- Understanding the meaning of words.

Help each child develop these skills over the first 5 years of his life by making reading a daily, joyful experience, telling lots of stories, playing pretend, and encouraging him to write—starting with scribbles and moving to real shapes, letters and numbers as he gets older.

The strategies outlined below can be used by providers to engage parents in tactics that can encourage early literacy.

Family Literacy Events

Offer family-participation events designed to encourage families to spend quality time reading together. Invite parents, siblings, grandparents, friends and relatives to join.

For some Family Literacy Event ideas visit:

http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf_publications/lda140.pdf

Parent-child literacy encouragement

Provide teacher/Director-initiated reminders of the value of reading and conversation in regard to literacy (highlighting repetition, teaching-by-example, and emphasis on fun using every-day tasks).

Examples:

- Recommend books/newspaper & magazine articles of interest.
- Provide copies of poems/rhymes used throughout the day (clean-up song, circle-time songs, etc.) allowing for parents to use them during home activities.
- Give parents lyrics used in songs from the classroom to encourage them to sing with the child.
- Provide writing encouragement (grocery lists, thank you notes, calendar events)
- Encourage question/answer communications emphasizing listening and repetition.

“Chatterbox” Topics

Topics from the classroom designed to enhance and expand on the curriculum being offered. The intent of these ideas is to get a conversation started with the child. For example:

- **Infant:** songs, rhymes, or simple sounds (like “da-da” or “moo-moo”)
- **Toddler:** colors, shapes, animals, songs, or rhymes regularly repeated in the classroom.
- **Preschooler:** themes, activities, songs, letters or numbers, treasure hunts, trivia questions, etc.

Book Recycling/Exchange

Designated area in the center designed to offer families a place to donate and recycle new and gently-used books. This could be a permanent area and an ongoing offering or simply a designated day of the week/month in which books can be donated or exchanged. As children outgrow books or need new materials to maintain reading interest, they could donate their books in exchange for “new” ones to take home. Additionally, families with limited

or no access to books and/or library services will have a convenient and economic option to enhance family literacy.

Visits to the library or visits from the Bookmobile

Encourage use of the local library services offered by highlighting library activities scheduled, events planned, and services offered by the library. Inquire about access to a bookmobile (mobile library visits from your local library).

Social Media Outreach

Create a place for electronic communications regarding literacy. Providers can create a blog, a Facebook/Twitter page, a podcast or any other form of online communication tool to keep families informed and to encourage new ideas. Remind parents of upcoming events, provide links to literacy-supportive websites, and provide real-time updates regarding classroom activities.

Social Media & New Technology for Child Care Directors

<http://vervenorthwest.com/blog/2009/03/social-media-new-technology-for-child-care-directors>

Resources for Directors & Teachers to support family literacy engagement
<p>Curious George Campaign www.read.gov/curious The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress</p>
<p>BrainWonders: Early Literacy http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/early-language-literacy/earlyliteracy2pagehandout.pdf <i>BrainWonders</i> is a joint project by Boston University Medical Center, Erickson Institute, and Zero to Three.</p>
<p>Promising Practices for Parents, Providers, and Practitioners www.earlyliteracylearning.org The Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL)</p>
<p>Reading Rockets www.readingrockets.org U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs</p>
<p>Language and Literacy: Frequently Asked Questions http://main.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter_par_2436_language_faq Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families</p>
<p>Get Ready to Read! getreadytoread.org National Center for Learning Disabilities, Inc</p>
<p>Early Beginnings: Early Literacy Knowledge and Instruction, A Guide for Early Childhood Administrators and professional development providers. lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/NELPEarlyBeginnings09.pdf National Institute for Literacy</p>
<p>A Child Becomes a Reader: Proven Ideas from Research for Parents, Birth Through Preschool, 3rd ed. http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/reading_pre.pdf National Institute for Literacy: The Partnership for Reading</p>
<p>Parent-Child Activities to Promote Language and Literacy http://main.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter_par_2436_language_act Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families</p>
<p>School Readiness Birth to Three: Language and Literacy http://main.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter_par_012_langindex Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families</p>